IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 5, 6, 11, and 16.

Amend claims 1-4, 7-10, and 12-15.

1. A slider for a disk drive, comprising:

a supporting structure having a top surface including a pocket and a plurality of protrusions protruding from the pocket, each of the protrusions having a protruding end that defines an air bearing surface; and

a coating on the entire top surface of the supporting structure other than the air bearing surfaces of the protrusions, such that the air bearing surfaces are completely free of the coating; and wherein the coating is formed from a material that is softer than the supporting structure.

2. The slider of claim 1 wherein the coating is located on and completely encases the entire pocket of the top surface of the supporting structure.

3. The slider of claim 1 wherein the top surface of the supporting structure has a leading edge, lateral edges, a trailing edge, and a plurality of corners located at intersections of the leading edge, the lateral edges, and the trailing edge, and the coating is located on each of the corners of the top surface of the supporting structure.

4. The slider of claim 1 wherein the top surface of the supporting structure has a leading edge, a trailing edge, and lateral edges extending therebetween, and the coating is located along and completely coats an entire length of the lateral edges of the top surface of the supporting structure.

7. The slider of claim 1 wherein the material of the coating is selected from the group consisting of metals, carbon, doped carbon, and polymers.

8. A slider for supporting a transducer for use in a disk drive, comprising:

a supporting structure having a top surface including a pocket, a leading edge, a trailing edge, lateral edges extending between the leading and trailing edges, corners located at intersections between the leading edge, the lateral edges, and the trailing edge;

a plurality of air bearing protrusions protruding from the pocket;

at least one shock-absorbing protrusion protruding from the pocket and having a height with respect to the pocket that differs from a height of the plurality of air bearing protrusions, such that the at least one shock-absorbing protrusion is discontinuous with the plurality of air bearing protrusions; and wherein

each of the air bearing protrusions and the at least one shock-absorbing protrusion has a protruding end that defines an air bearing surface, and the at least one shock-absorbing protrusion comprises a material that is softer than the supporting structure.

9. The slider of claim 8 wherein the at least one shock-absorbing protrusion comprises a plurality of shock-absorbing protrusions, each of which is located at a respective one of the corners of the top surface of the supporting structure.

10. The slider of claim 8 wherein the shock-absorbing protrusion comprises a plurality of shock-absorbing protrusions, each of which is located along an entire length of a respective one of the lateral edges of the top surface of the supporting structure.

12. The slider of claim 8 wherein the shock-absorbing protrusion comprises a material selected from the group consisting of metals, carbon, doped carbon, and polymers.

13. A magnetic recording device for reading or writing magnetically, comprising in combination:

a disk comprising a substrate and a metallic magnetic layer;

a head support on a slider for magnetically reading data to or writing data from the magnetic layer on the disk, the slider comprising a supporting structure having a top surface with a pocket, the top surface of the supporting structure having a leading edge, a trailing edge, lateral edges extending between the leading and trailing edges, and a plurality of corners located at intersections of the leading edge, the lateral edges, and the trailing edge;

a plurality of air bearing protrusions protruding from the pocket, each of the air bearing protrusions having a protruding end that defines an air bearing surface, wherein at least some of the air bearing protrusions are shock-absorbing protrusions, each having a height relative to the pocket that differs from a height of other ones of the air bearing protrusions, such that the shock-absorbing protrusions are discontinuous with said other ones of the air bearing protrusions, and at least the air bearing surfaces of the shock-absorbing protrusions comprise a material that is softer than the supporting structure;

a motor operable to rotate the disk; and

an actuator connected to the slider for moving a head across the disk.

14. The device of claim 13 wherein each of the shock-absorbing protrusions is located at a respective one of the corners of the top surface of the supporting structure.

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15. The device of claim 13 wherein each of the shock-absorbing protrusions is located and extends along an entire length of a respective one of the lateral edges of the top surface of the supporting structure.